

“Inspiring Exemplary Cultural Landscapes”

3. Existing Parks

3.1 Introduction

The City of Keller has a disparate number of parks relative to both overall population and geographic distribution within each part of the city. Parks are in considerable shortage in this park-loving community, as is clearly shown in the Map, “Existing Parks” with their service radii, and discussed in Chapter 6, Needs Assessment.



Parks are enjoyed by all age groups and provide an opportunity for both physical activity and social interaction.

In the area of the City south of Keller Parkway, there are several parks and greater connectivity one to the other. However, on the north side of Keller Parkway, clearly there are almost no parks at all. Three areas of park land exist, and of that, two are undeveloped. Moreover, Keller has a lack of neighborhood parks - the “backbone” of a healthy parks and recreation system. With only a few neighborhood parks serving the city since 1990, there is a great need to meet, particularly with this type of park.

In total, Keller has 18 existing developed and undeveloped parks that are dedicated to the provision of outdoor recreation facilities. These parks range in size from the 1.3 acre Bursey Ranch Neighborhood Park for passive recreation to the large active recreation park like Keller Sports Park that is 148 acres in size. The total acreage of all developed parks serving the citizens of Keller exceeds 339 acres including 84 acres of open space and includes the Bursey Ranch and the Chase Oaks Activity Node (Neighborhood Parks); Bear Creek and Johnson Road and The Parks at Town Center (Community Parks); Keller Sports Park (Special Purpose Park); Big Bear Creek Greenbelt and Keller Smithfield Activity

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Node (Linear Parks). Land dedicated to parks that are currently undeveloped totals 97.7 acres and includes two (2) Neighborhood Parks, one (1) Community Park, two (2) Special Purpose Parks and three (3) Linear Parks.

Purpose of the Existing Parks and Open Space Inventory - A key part of the park planning process is to understand what park and open space facilities are currently available, and to assess the current condition of those facilities and whether they are addressing the current park and open space needs of the City. By comparing the available park facilities with the number of people that the parks system serves, the need for new or improved recreational facilities can be determined.

Components of the Existing Parks Inventory

The “inventory” of existing parks reviews several aspects of each park in the Keller system. These are:

- **Classification:** What is the purpose of a given park? Is it intended to serve a local neighborhood around it, giving children and young adults a place to play? Is it intended to serve a much larger population, providing fields for organized league play? How was the park originally classified, and is that classification still warranted today? The answers to these questions determine whether a park should be classified as a neighborhood park, a community park, a special purpose park, a regional park or a linear park.
- **Location:** Where is the park located in relation to the population that it serves? Is it accessible?
- **Service Area:** What are the limits of the area served by each park? Are there any major thoroughfares or physical features that create barriers to accessing the park?
- **Size of the Park:** How big is the park? Is it large enough to adequately accomplish its intended purpose?
- **Amenities in each Park:** What does the park contain? Are the facilities appropriate for the type of park? For example, a ball field complex requiring a large amount of parking should not be contained in a neighborhood park, where the noise, traffic and nighttime lighting create a nuisance for residents of that neighborhood.
- **Layout:** Is the arrangement of facilities in each park appropriate?
- **Condition of the Park:** What is the general condition of the facilities in each park?
- **Natural Areas/ Sustainable Measures:** Does the park contain areas that are natural? Is maintenance effort minimized through limited mowing areas? Is water use for irrigation minimized by use of native plants with low water requirements?
- **Special Considerations:** Does the park provide facilities for the physically challenged that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act?

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These issues are reviewed here for each of the existing parks in the Keller parks system. This inventory is developed from on-site reviews of each individual park by the Planning Team and cursory reviews conducted by the City staff.



A morning jogger takes the shaded asphalt surface trail in Bear Creek Park.

**3.2
Park Classification**

National and state guidelines identify three broad categories of parks, which are:

Local, Close to Home Space, usually located within the community served by the facility, which includes mini/pocket parks, neighborhood parks and community parks.

Unique Space, which may be either local or regional in nature. These parks can be defined as areas that are unique in some way, whether because of physical features or because of the types of facilities provided. Parks in this category may include linear parks, special use parks, or land conservancies.

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Regional Space, usually located within an hour or two driving distance. Parks in this category serve a number of communities, and include regional metropolitan parks and regional park reserves.

The category “Close to Home Parks” is the most important category and is of the greatest immediate concern to the City of Keller. Close to home parks address day-to-day facilities for all ages and activities, and are usually within walking or driving distance from where we live. The two close to home park types currently existing in Keller are:

- Neighborhood parks
- Community parks, e.g. Bear Creek Park

Close to home parks are the most important, addressing day-to-day facilities for all ages and activities.

A description of the general types of parks included in the Keller parks system follows:

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide the foundation for recreation in the **Local Close to Home** park system. Ideally, they provide amenities and recreation space for the entire family, but are within easy walking or cycling distance of the people they serve.

The neighborhood park typically serves one large or several smaller neighborhoods. The ideal neighborhood park in Keller, generally 5 to 10 acres in size, should serve no more than 3,000 to 4,000 residents per park. In Keller, Johnson Road Park is an example of a neighborhood park.

- Neighborhood parks should be accessible to residents who live within a one-half mile radius of the park. Ideally neighborhood park facilities should be located within a quarter mile radius of the residents who will use those facilities.
- Neighborhood parks are frequently located adjacent to elementary schools, so as to share acquisition and development costs with the school district. In addition, adjacencies of park and school grounds allow for joint use and

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- sharing of facilities. It also lends itself to the community’s involvement with the school grounds and vice versa. This often leads to a synergistic result that adds to the quality of life for everyone.
- Neighborhood parks are generally located away from major arterial streets and provide easy access for the users that surround it. A neighborhood park should be accessible without having to cross major arterial streets.

Neighborhood Parks should be accessible without crossing major arterial streets.

The following planning aspects are functions of National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guidelines for Neighborhood Parks:

Size - The size of a neighborhood park may vary considerably due to physical locations around the park. An ideal size for neighborhood parks in Keller should be approximately five acres. Neighborhood parks typically range in size from a minimum of three acres to 10 acres and more. The undeveloped Overton Ridge Park at 7 acres is right in the middle of the desired range of sizes.

Location - If possible, neighborhood parks should be centrally located in neighborhoods they serve. An ideal location, for example, is adjacent to an elementary school. Neighborhood Parks should be accessible to pedestrian traffic from all parts of the area served, and should be located adjacent to local or minor collector streets which do not allow high-speed traffic.

An ideal location for a neighborhood park is adjacent to an elementary school.

Amenities - Amenities generally located in neighborhood parks may include the following:

- Playground equipment with adequate safety surfacing around the playground
- Picnic areas with benches, picnic tables and cooking grills
- Shaded pavilions and gazebos
- Hike and bike trails
- Unlighted multi-use play areas for baseball, soccer, football, softball, rugby practices, etc.
- Unlighted tennis courts
- Unlighted multi-purpose courts
- Active areas for unorganized play
- Security lighting

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Johnson Road Park, situated adjacent to the City library, is a neighborhood Park that includes a playground built in 1990 as a PACT park, ‘Parents and Children Together’ and rebuilt in 2004 as “Imagination Station”.

Parking – Parking for neighborhood parks is typically not provided within the park. The reason for this is that this type of park is conceived as serving a sector of the community that is near to the park and within easy walking distance, up to 1/2 mile or less. Should parking be necessary, generally on-street parallel parking is the optimum solution. This promotes walking to neighborhood parks as the primary means of access.

Should a need be identified for parking based on the size of the park and facilities provided, a minimum of seven spaces with an additional two handicapped parking spaces is recommended. This calculation is based on the recommendation of 5 spaces for the first three acres, and 1 space for each additional acre. However, the amount of parking needed as a guideline is based on the size of the park, the facilities it contains and the number of users.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates a typical neighborhood park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each neighborhood park should be designed as a unique part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

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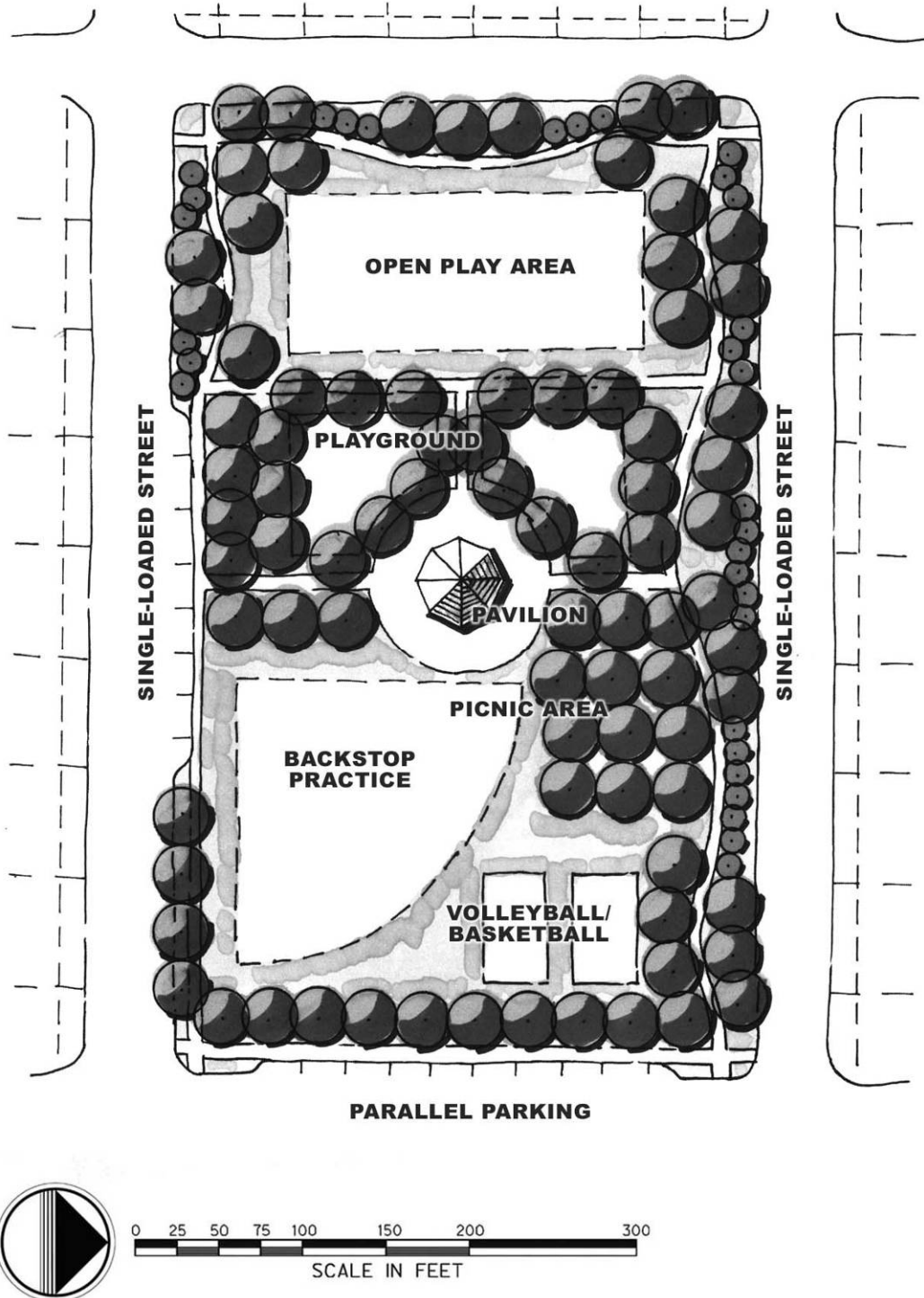
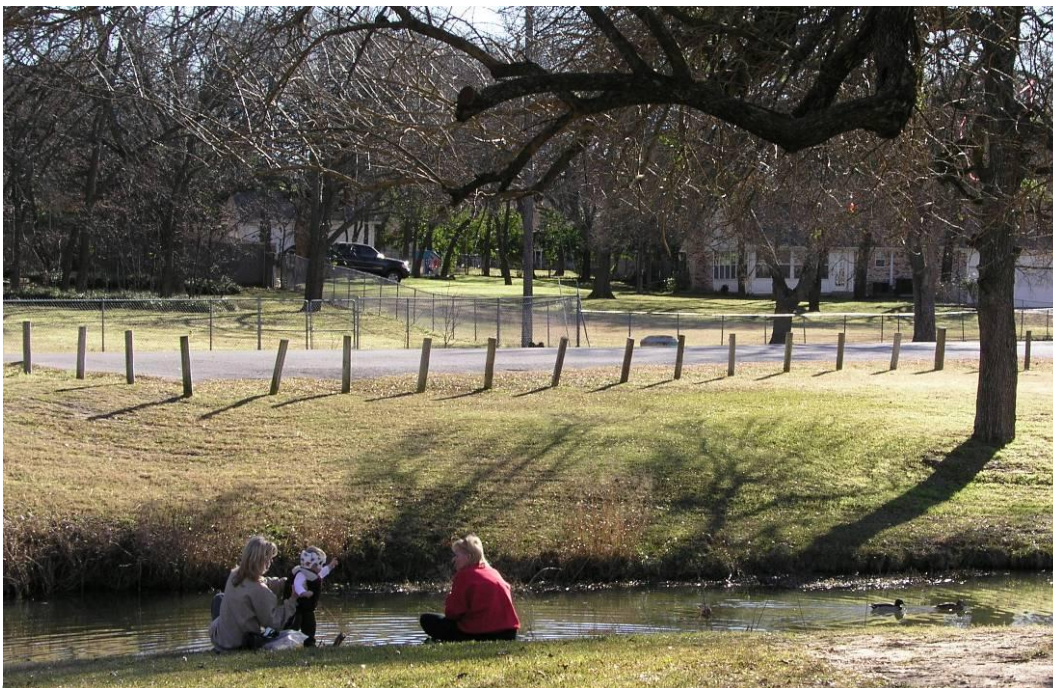


Figure 3.1 Typical Neighborhood Park

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Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city. Community parks are usually reached by automobile, although residents adjacent to the park and trail users may walk or cycle to it, which render community parks *de facto* neighborhood parks. A variety of recreational facilities are provided, including in some cases, lighted playing fields for organized sports, hike/bike trails and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users.



Two friends enjoy the calm and tranquility of the water at Bear Creek Community Park, while attending to a child.

Bear Creek Park is an example of an ideal community park. At 44 acres it is large enough to provide a variety of facilities for active and passive recreation. The creek is a huge draw for park users, either to stroll along its edge or to picnic. In fact, it is so much enjoyed that residents from neighboring cities make a special effort to visit this park.

The following planning aspects are functions of National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guidelines for Community Parks:

Size – The typical community park should be large enough so it can provide a variety of amenities while still leaving open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas. The park should also have room for expansion, as new facilities

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are required. A typical community park varies in size from 20 acres to over 50 acres. In Keller, Community Parks range in size from 44 acres at Bear Creek Park to 101 acres at The Parks at Town Center.

Location – Community parks should be located near a major thoroughfare to provide easy access from different parts of the city. Because of the potential for noise and bright lights at night, community parks should be buffered from adjacent residential areas.

Amenities – Amenities generally located in community parks may include:

- Play equipment
- Active free play areas
- Picnic areas and pavilion(s)
- Restrooms
- Jogging, bicycle or nature trails
- Lighted ball fields, suitable for organized competitive events
- Recreation center (if appropriate)
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park
- Security lighting
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of the unique characteristics of the site, such as nature trails or fishing adjacent to ponds, swimming pools, amphitheaters, etc.

Parking – This varies based on the facilities provided and the size of park. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of five spaces per active programmed acre, plus additional parking for specific facilities within the park such as pools or ball fields. The specific amount of parking provided in each park should be determined by the facilities provided in that park.

Figure 3.2 on the following page illustrates a typical community park and some of the elements that the park might contain. Note that this is simply a typical arrangement, and each community park should be designed as a unique part of the community.

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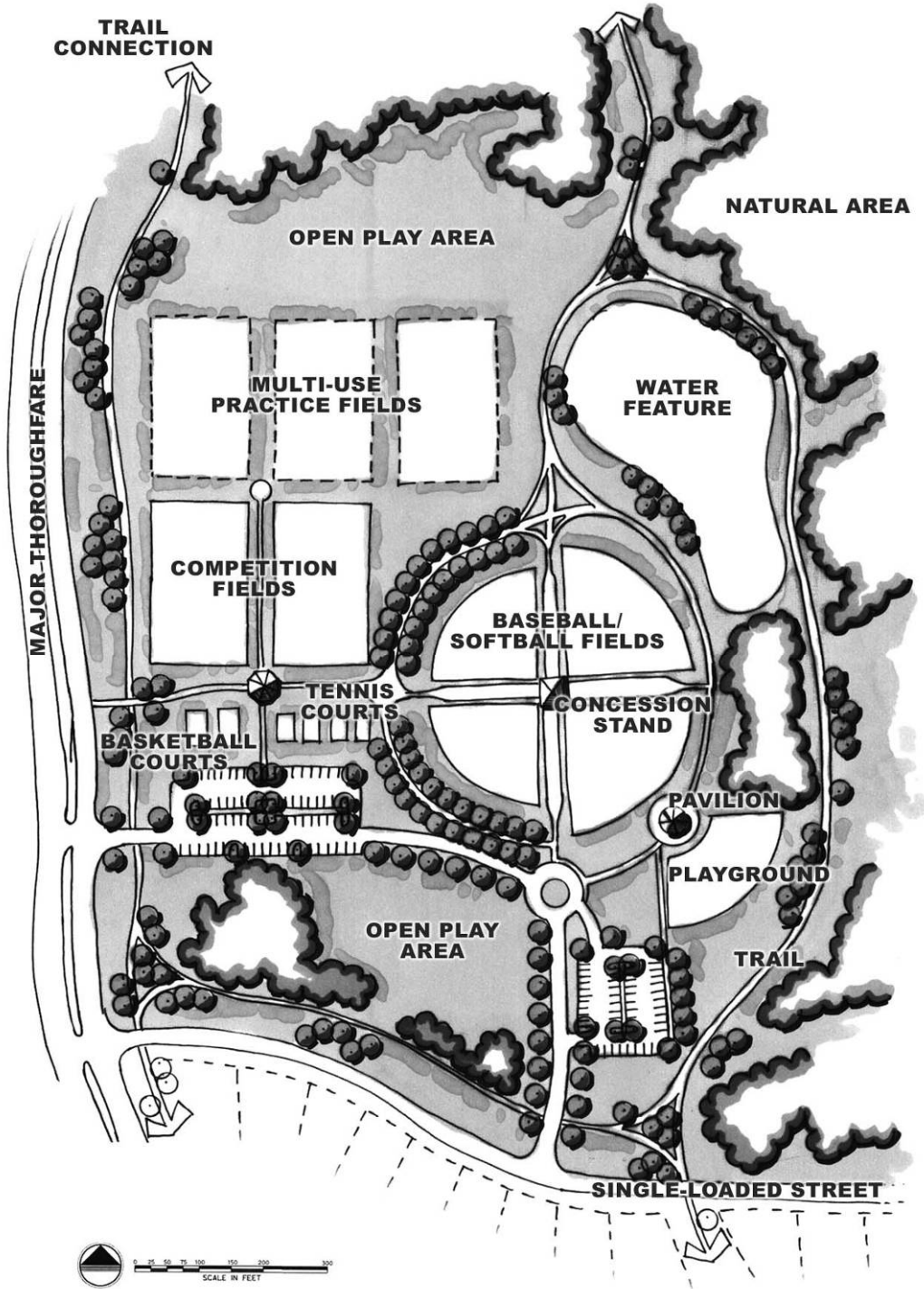


Figure 3.2 Typical Community Park

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Linear Parks including Hike and Bike Trails

Linear parks are open park areas that generally follow some natural or man-made feature that is linear in nature, such as creeks, abandoned railroad rights-of-way or power line or utility corridor easements. Properly developed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel, these parks can serve to link or connect other parks in the local system, as well as schools, libraries, and other major destinations. No specific standards apply to linear/linkage parks other than to be large enough to adequately accommodate the resources they follow. They can also serve as linear greenbelts, which preserve open space.

Two manmade elements that are typically utilized for a linear park or trail include railway and utility lines. Examples in Keller include the railway that parallels Main Street on the western edge of the City and TXU Utility easements.

Keller has a number of trail segments that are planned to eventually link with the Big Bear Creek Greenbelt. Some are sections that have already been constructed by developers, in short lengths. As the City acquires rights-of-way, and with developers installing trail linkages, the plan is that eventually all will connect. In some cases, the trail development design and schedule is planned to be coordinated with the roadway design and reconstruction, as with Keller-Smithfield Road.

Special Purpose Parks

Keller has three Special Purpose Parks, Bates Street Park (in “Old Town Keller”), Keller Sports Park (KSP), and Veterans Memorial Park. They range in size from 0.3 acres to 148 acres. Special purpose parks are designed to accommodate specialized recreational activities. Because the facility needs for each activity type are different, each special purpose park usually provides for one or a few activities. Examples of special purpose parks include:

- Golf courses
- Athletic fields or complexes
- Nature centers or large natural preserves
- Swimming pool centers
- Tennis complexes
- Activity Nodes
- Dog parks
- Skate parks
- Cemeteries

Athletic complexes and golf courses are the most common types of special purpose parks. Athletic complexes seek to provide fields for organized play in a location that can accommodate the traffic and noise that a large number of users can generate. Athletic complexes should include sufficient fields so that leagues can congregate at one facility and not have to spread out in different locations.

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Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small green gathering spaces ranging from 1/8 acre to 1 acre. Due to the size of this type of park, parking is typically not provided. Therefore, pocket parks are accessed by pedestrian and bicycle means. Benches, fountains, landscaping, and other focal features are common items found in these parks. Size is not the key factor of the typical pocket park, but rather the quality of the landscaping and features that go into the park.

Home Owners Associations (HOAs) are encouraged to develop and maintain pocket parks, which add to the community domain with no maintenance required on the part of the City. Such small pocket parks make it easier for such residential developments to add localized control and quality, though as private (commonly gated) developments, they are not accessible to the public and therefore are not included in the City’s parks and recreation system.

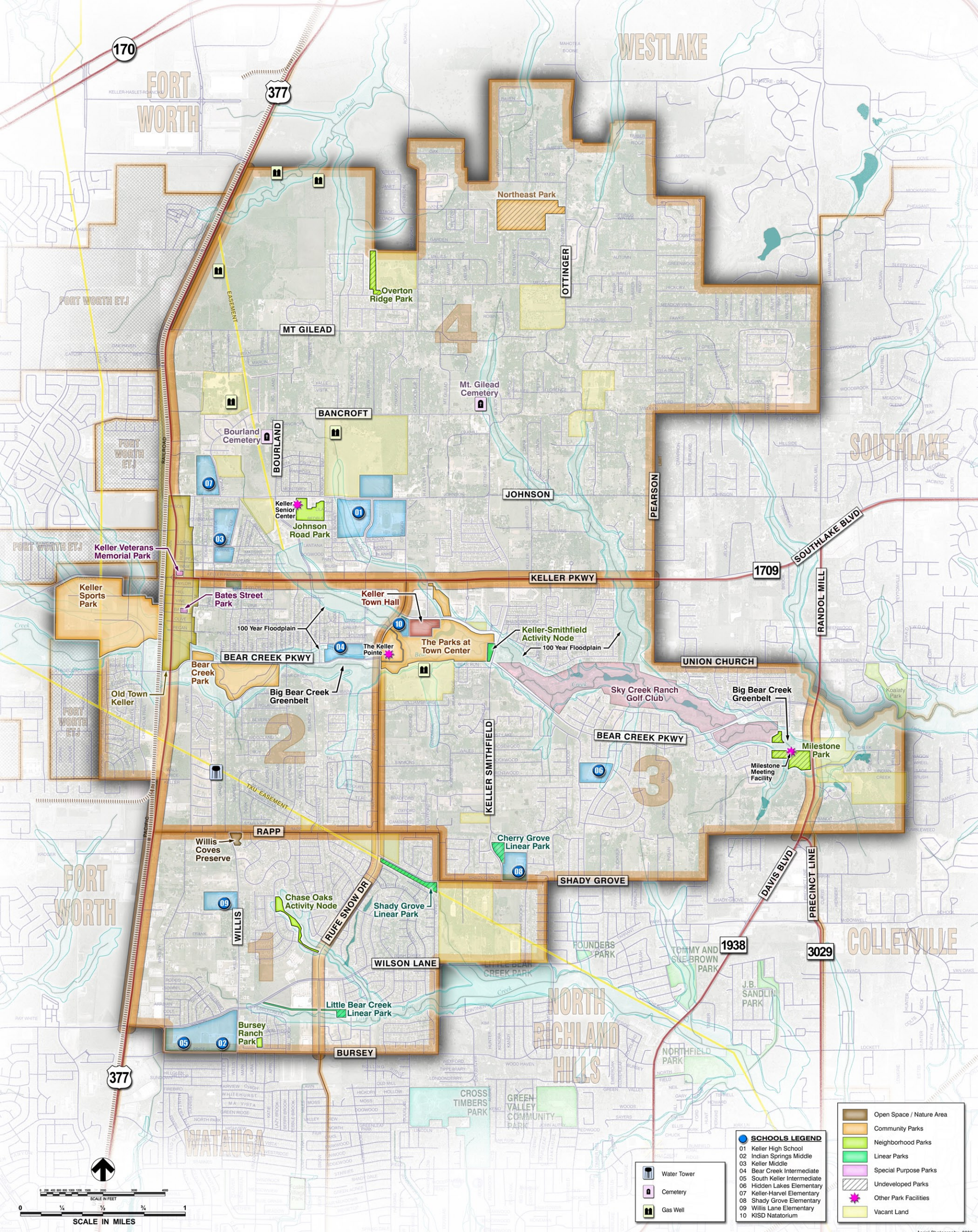
HOA Parks

Typically, Home Owners Association (HOA) parks are not included in Parks Master Plans. There are important reasons for their exclusion as far as acreage and service are concerned. A Parks Master Plan is a tool for measuring public facilities and HOA parks typically are not available to the public. HOA parks are often significantly smaller than the 5 to 10 acres recommended for Neighborhood Parks by NRPA guidelines.

The Existing Parks and Open Space Map, on the next page depicts all of the existing parks, recreational facilities and open space in the City of Keller.



Linear parks provide important linkages between various destinations in a city. When well planned, mothers will feel comfortable to take their children along.



August 30, 2007

EXISTING PARKS & OPEN SPACE

CITY OF KELLER, TEXAS



Half Associates
ENGINEERS - ARCHITECTS - SCIENTISTS - PLANNERS - SURVEYORS

Concept plan only. Subject to change. Land use locations and configurations are approximate and may be altered to respond to changing development conditions and requirements. Plan subject to governmental approval.

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3.3

Size and Location of the Park System in Keller

The parks system in Keller includes 9 city-owned developed parks totaling more than 339 acres of park land, including 84 acres of nature areas/ open space. An additional 98 acres of undeveloped land are dedicated to two future Neighborhood Parks (24 acres), two Community Park (61 acres), two Special Purpose Parks (1 acre) and three Linear Parks (12 acres). In all, the total acreage of both developed and undeveloped parks accounts for 437 acres. A full inventory of the parks and recreation is presented in Table 3.1, found on page 3-15 a).

Neighborhood Parks in Keller

Keller has three developed neighborhood parks totaling 21.3 acres: one, Chase Oaks Activity Node is five acres, Johnson Road Park (which has Special Purpose features discussed below) has fifteen acres within it and Bursey Ranch Park is 1.3 acres in size. Land acquired by the City and dedicated to two future neighborhood parks (Milestone and Overton Ridge) totals roughly 24 acres. This number is small for a city the size of Keller, especially given the relatively high income of its residents.

In the area north of Keller Parkway, the system of neighborhood parks underserves the City, judging by the coverage pattern created by the cluster of one half mile service radii.

In the area south of Keller Parkway, judging by service radii, the ratio of available neighborhood parks to non-existent parks, (helped by the presence of three community parks, which also serve as neighborhood parks), is slightly better. Neighborhood park acreage including undeveloped parks totals roughly 45 acres.

Community Parks in Keller

Four community parks are provided in Keller: three developed parks are Bear Creek Park, Keller Sports Park, (the largest park with 148 acres), The Parks at Town Center and the fourth undeveloped park is Northeast Park. The location of the first three parks is relatively central, lying just south of Keller Parkway. Their service radii form a partial “chain” west to east. The Keller Sports Park is somewhat at the periphery of the City, located west of Highway 377. Northeast Park is located, as the name suggests, near the northeast part of Keller. Community park acreage in Keller totals 335.7 acres.

Special Purpose Parks in Keller

Two Special Purpose Parks, totalling 0.8 acres, are located adjacent to the “Old Town” Keller district, at the westernmost edge of Keller, close to Keller Parkway: The Veterans Memorial Park and Bates Street Park. The Veterans Memorial Park is a developed park, while the Bates Street Park is undeveloped.



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Linear Parks in Keller

Keller has five (5) Linear Parks, two developed and three undeveloped. These parks range in size from 1.6 acres at Little Bear Creek (undeveloped) to the 26 acres at the Big Bear Creek Greenbelt. Keller’s developed Linear Parks’ area totals 29.2 acres. Three undeveloped parks’ area totals 12.14 acres. All of Keller’s linear parks are all located south of Keller Parkway and together constitute roughly 43 acres.

Additionally, the City has identified a number of existing and proposed trail linkages, as shown in Figure 3.3, below:

Figure 3.3 - Existing and Proposed Trail Easements and R.O.W.'s	Mileage
Eastern Trail	0.66
Indian Greenwalk	0.25
Indian Trail	1.70
Meandering Trail	1.02
Meandering Connector	0.36
Shady Grove Greenwalk	0.33
Preston Greenwalk	0.93
Brentwood Trail	0.45
Rapp Road Greenwalk	0.50
Danbury Greenwalk	0.53
Little Bear Creek	1.10
Total	7.83

Open Space Preserves/ Nature Areas in Keller

The 4 acres Willis Coves Open Space is Keller’s only park that is dedicated as a nature area in its entirety. The location of this open space is at the northern edge of Area I, at Willis Street. Two other parks that contain dedicated natural areas are The Parks and Town Center (Area 3) and Big Bear Creek Greenbelt (Area 3) that have 70 acres and 10 acres respectively dedicated as natural open space. Citywide, the total of 84 acres is dedicated to natural areas.

Recreational Facilities in Keller

Keller has two recreational facilities: The Keller Pointe and the Keller Senior Center. It is interesting that both are set within City parks: The Keller Pointe is part of The Parks at Town Center; the Keller Senior Center is set within the Johnson Road Neighborhood Park. Both facilities are located relatively centrally in the City, with the Keller Senior Center being located further north in Area IV.



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Cemeteries in Keller

Cemeteries in cities, including privately operated ones, may also serve as Special Purpose Parks due to their historic and cultural value. In Keller, there are two cemeteries, Mt. Gilead and Bourland, both located in the northern, older part of Keller.

Pocket Parks in Keller

Keller does not have any public Pocket Parks in its parks and recreation system. Pocket Parks, due to their small size and unique function, may be considered within the category of Special Purpose Parks.

HOA Parks in Keller

There are a total of ten existing HOA parks in the City of Keller. The HOA parks in Keller range from 0.6 to 5.03 acres in size (see Table 3.1: Existing Park Facilities). The average size is 2.5 acres, with the smallest 0.6 acres. One HOA park, Hidden Lakes Idlewood, meets the minimum recommended 5 acre size for a Neighborhood Park. The others do not meet the size guidelines necessary to provide the fundamental features of a Neighborhood Park. The existing total acreage of 24.46 acres is categorized as “Pocket Park”, which does not provide the fundamental services and amenities of a Neighborhood Park, and is not used for neighborhood park type service area assessment. These pocket parks serve limited needs for private user groups and are not available to the public. The parks are maintained by the HOA’s and supplement public amenities.

School Parks in Keller

The information of school grounds and recreation facilities managed by the Keller Independent School District and Tarrant County Community College is provided in Table 3.1.

3.4

Description of Developed and Undeveloped Parks

Table 3.1 Existing Parks Facilities on the next page itemizes each park in the City of Keller in terms of park classification, acreage, status of development and quantified park facilities and infrastructure.

